

MINUTES  
MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL  
300 NORTH HIGH STREET  
MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2022**

**PUBLIC HEARING:** 6:30 P.M., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall Auditorium.

ORD. 6-22 AN ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (MOTOR VEHICLE HIGHWAY).

No public comment.

ORD. 7-22 AN ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (BUILDING COMMISSIONER).

No public comment.

ORD. 8-22 AN ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (ANIMAL SHELTER).

No public comment.

President Robinson announced they are going to adjourn the public hearing and reconvene for the Regular Meeting at 7 PM. ADJOURNED.

**REGULAR MEETING:** 7:00 P.M., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall Auditorium.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Deputy Mayor Richard Ivy.

**INVOCATION:** Dave Hershey of Yorktown Church of God.

**CITIZEN RECOGNITION:** Councilman Green states it is a privilege and an honor to be standing in front of everyone tonight and thanks all for being here. He would like to recognize two individuals he has known for well over 20 years, first remembering them as “Chuck and Ron.” Chuck and Ronda both started in the Band Program at Muncie Southside High School in 1995. They were both graduates of Muncie Southside and Ball State University. Green relays how wonderful it is when great things come from Southside. Since they started at South in 1995, they worked with the Band Program there and loved it, that is, until Southside was no longer. They were state champions in 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2004, which at that time the score in 2004 was the highest score ever given to a marching band track show. Green verifies if the record still holds today which unfortunately, it does not. Continuing on, they were champions in 2006 and 2008 as well. At Muncie Central, they were champions in 2014 and 2021. Chuck is the first Chair on Action Track Sports (here in Muncie), Vice-President of Motivate Our Minds, member of Glad Tidings Church Board of Directors, field show judge for the State of Indiana, State Board of Music Directors and also Assistant Superintendent of Muncie Community School Corporation (better known as Dr. Chuck Reynolds). Ronda was Southside’s Color Guard and Winter Guard Director and now does both for Central. She is also the Director of the Guard for the Pride of Mid-America, which is Ball State. She was involved in IHSCGA (Indiana High School Color Guard Association) as 1998

State Champs and finalist for 13 consecutive years (Class B, Class A, and Open Class). Which you would have to be in to the Winter Guard to understand that but those were the different classes they could be classified. They were State Champions in 2005 and received the silver in 2014 along with being State Finalists from 2014 through 2021 (with the exception of 2018 where they did not perform at all that year). Chuck and Ronda have such an influence on all the students from both Southside to Central. Education was first... to teach the kids and teach them well. One of the things that Green noticed that they did, not only with the Marching Band Program but also with the program of concert band, were being considered one of the best bands able to sight read in the State of Indiana with Judges making comments about that. They are and have been committed and dedicated to teaching the high school students to do their best for themselves and accepted that challenge. For the staff, they made sure they did that. Everyone did their best and then they instilled that drive and motivation into the students of Southside and Central to further their success as students. Many students are successful in their careers today because of what the Band Program taught them from Chuck and Ronda. They are still motivated today, each and every one of those young people. Green begins sharing some stories regarding Chuck and Ronda. There was a year they had fought very hard and went back and forth with Jay County. Jay County would win a contest then Southside would win a contest and they kept flipping back and forth. Dr. Reynolds made these posters stating ".01" and put them all around the chain-link fence and the playing field. The average person driving down the street wouldn't have any idea of what it meant but that was just how close they came to beating Jay County for first place. It motivated the young people to work very hard that year and they ended up winning at the State Fair. Another incident that happened was the time when the football coach did not agree with the band schedule and there were many football players in the Band. Coach got the idea to tell the players that if they were going to play football, they were required to be at the practices. It backfired. Those young men said its okay, we'll go to Band. The coach recanted very quickly when he realized the players were dedicated and committed to the Band Program. They instilled within the young people, the staff and themselves alike as a big family. They took care of each other and met the needs they needed to meet. Over the times, there were kids that were not able to pay for the band fees so staff and different ones would come up and give money to cover those things for the young people. They have been such a blessing and a benefit do all. Green acknowledges all three of his children were in the Marching Band in 2004, the year they won and set that highest score record. Tonight, we are recognizing Dr. Chuck Reynolds and Mrs. Ronda Reynolds.

Dr. Reynolds expresses in hearing Councilman Green say those wonderful things, you don't think about what you're doing when you're doing it, you're just in the moment and enjoying teaching young folks and working with great people. In looking at the audience, he recognizes Mr. Clark who was his Band Director, instilled all of those same concepts in himself, and thanks him frequently for doing that. He also sees many of his former students here (referencing Andrew Popp in particular) and expresses he just had a wonderful opportunity where they had great staff, great families and great kids to work with. They have been blessed with so many achievements because of all of their hard work and dedication so he claims he was just a small piece of that claw that that turned the big machine. They were able to bring kids lots of pride in the City of Muncie and it was just something that they did and love. Dr. Reynolds thanks them all very much.

**ROLL CALL:****PRESENT****ABSENT**

Aaron Clark

X

Ro Selvey

X

Troy Ingram

X

Jeff Green	X	
Jeff Robinson	X	
Brandon Garrett	X	
Brad Polk	X	
Jerry Dishman	X	
District #6 Representative TBD		X

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made by Polk and seconded by Ingram to Amend the Minutes from January 10, 2022 and Approve the Minutes from the two Finance Committee Meetings (September 27, 2021 and October 11, 2021) and the Special Meeting (October 18, 2021) from the budget season and the Regular Meeting (January 10, 2022) Minutes as Amended (correcting list of names in the vote of Vice-President on page 4 and names on motion to introduce ord. 4-22 on page 10). A roll call vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays. JAN. 10<sup>TH</sup> MINUTES AMENDED. SEPT. 27<sup>TH</sup>, OCT. 11<sup>TH</sup>, OCT. 18<sup>TH</sup> MINUTES APPROVED & JAN. 10<sup>TH</sup> MINUTES APPROVED AS AMENDED.

**REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS:** President Robinson advises there are no Reports of City Officers this evening but he does want to take the opportunity to commend and applaud the Muncie City Street Department for the work that they did last week with the heavy snowfall. Additionally, he wants to thank the Muncie Sanitary District for coming alongside and helping clear those streets as well. It was a tough job and he is aware they were working around the clock so on behalf of all of the Council, thank you.

Councilwoman Selvey would like to add that they would also like to thank all the Firefighters, EMS and the Police Department. They were super busy the last three days and did it with professionalism and did a wonderful job taking care of our citizens so she just wanted to add that.

**APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** President Robinson informs there are no appointments to make this month but several coming in March. There is an appointment to make to the Muncie Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee as well as an appointment to the Beech Grove Cemetery Board of Trustees in which one member has resigned so there will be an opening to finish that term (which that term expires March 31, 2024). Additionally, they have the Muncie Community School Board appointment to make. As most know and remember the Common Council, by State Code, must submit the names of three qualified individuals to the President of Ball State University for consideration of appointment to the Muncie Community School Board. Robinson received a letter from the President of the University recalling some specific qualifications and requirements stating the individuals must be 21 years old, must be United States citizen, high school graduate or GED with post-secondary educational degree preferred, residency within the Muncie Community School District, they cannot be a Ball State University trustee or the Ball State University President, they cannot be a family member of a Ball State University trustee or a family member of the Ball State University President. They cannot be or have a family member employed by Muncie Community Schools and the appointment must comply with the Conflict of Interest policy regarding appointments to the governing body of Muncie Community Schools. Anyone that is interested in any of these board positions and specifically the school board position can go to the website GoServeMuncie and register your interest in any of those boards. There is a specific tab just for the Muncie Community School Board because there are some restrictions/requirements for that.

Councilwoman Selvey references as being a teacher for Muncie Community Schools, she asks anyone who is interested and who seriously cares about teachers along with what is going on in our schools to apply. Please do not apply for this just to be on the board. She has spoken as an educator with

other educators and they are all struggling. She explains they need someone to speak for them and requests for people to take this seriously. MCS has around 3,000 to 4,000 employees who are all looking for some hope and need someone who is very vocal, determined and a good listener to the teachers. They need help and she is speaking on behalf of every teacher at Muncie Community Schools.

#### **ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY INTRODUCED:**

##### ORD. 2-22 AN ORDINANCE DECLARING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TARGET AREA FOR GREATER MUNCIE INDIANA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, INC. (713 E. Willard St.)

A motion was made by Polk and seconded by Ingram to Adopt.

Zane Bishop, City of Muncie Redevelopment Commission, states this ordinance is to provide a three-year tax abatement for a house that Habitat for Humanity is currently building at 713 East Willard to be sold to the homeowner that has already been chosen. The estimate of the total abatement over the three years is a sliding scale to be \$1,500.

Eileen Oaks, Resource Development Director with Muncie Habitat for Humanity, just wanted to share her gratitude and states this is a great way to get their partner families off on the right foot of home ownership. Charles couldn't be here tonight as he is currently at work at Pizza King and wasn't able to join them tonight. However, he is so moved and excited to be a homeowner. They just really appreciate this opportunity and thank them. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays.

ADOPTED.

##### ORD. 3-22 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE AMENDING THE TRAFFIC SCHEDULES SET FORTH IN CHAPTER 80 OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE CODE OF ORDINANCES.

A motion was made by Polk and seconded by Ingram to Adopt.

Council Attorney Dan Gibson recommends that they withdraw the previous motion to Adopt and Table it until next month. He spoke with Aubrey Crist (one of the City Attorneys) earlier today and they have a few issues they need to work out with the City Engineer on the requested changes. He believes they should have it ready to go by next month with potential amendments, or maybe none at all, but are not sure yet. Given that the City Engineer is new to the job and had a tough week last week with the heavy snow, they need some more time to work through those issues. Questions called.

Mark Kinman, East 26<sup>th</sup> Street, expresses the Southside Neighborhood Association had a board meeting last month and it was brought to their attention that there is a big problem at 17<sup>th</sup> and Mulberry. It is a 2-way stop down there and recalls just having driven it tonight. Mulberry Street from 12<sup>th</sup> Street all the way to 18<sup>th</sup> Street is a straight shot down with many kids that live in that area. It is double-parking on both sides so the crossroads that come across cause cars to pull halfway out in the intersection before they can ever see if anybody is coming. He explains it was brought up to make 17<sup>th</sup> and Mulberry a 4-way stop, although, he would like to see every street from 12<sup>th</sup> Street to 18<sup>th</sup> Street, all crossroads, all of them be made into 4-way stops. That is only because of all the problems down there with all the parking. Like he mentioned, if you are going over 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> to go to Madison Street to go to Walnut, you're pretty much pulling out in the middle of the intersection before you even see if anyone is coming down the road. It has been a big problem, especially for the kids down in that area. Again, this was just brought to his attention at the Neighborhood Association meeting last month so he wanted to bring it to the Council immediately. Since they are now considering tabling this to do some more talking, he would like to see if making all those crossroads 4-way stops is something that can be added.

Robinson replies that is certainly something they will need the consideration and approval of the City Engineer but they can surely bring it to his attention along with ord. 3-22, as Attorney Gibson and

Attorney Crist meet with him to discuss that. Kinman adds if it can't be done, he would like to see another one written up so it can be done rather quickly. Robinson reminds him that there is still the overall traffic ordinance that is still hanging out there. He would imagine certainly that if this is something the City Engineer would approve of, then they could add that to the overall ordinance that is currently Tabled. In closing, he thanks Kinman for the information. Questions called.

A motion was made by Polk and seconded by Ingram to Table. A roll call vote showed 7 yeas and 1 nay (Robinson). TABLED. (Gibson clarifies this motion to Table was an amendment to the previous motion to Adopt since Polk was the one who made both motions.)

**ORD. 4-22 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE AMENDING SECTION 152.16 OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE CODE OF ORDINANCES.**

A motion was made by Selvey and seconded by Ingram to Adopt. No comments. A roll call vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays. ADOPTED.

**NEW ORDINANCES:**

**ORD. 5-22 BEING AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY OF MUNCIE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE FROM THE R-3 RESIDENCE ZONE TO THE BV VARIETY BUSINESS ZONE LOCATED AT 3405 N. BELLAIRE AVE., MUNCIE, INDIANA.**

A motion was made by Ingram and seconded by Green to Introduce.

Roger Overbey, E. Dartmouth Ave. and Vice-President of the Morningside Neighborhood Association, confirms this is regarding Reynolds Farm Equipment (John Deer) and the Council assures it is. He states he was at the Zoning Board at the County last month and they discussed this. He continues John Deer is right at their backyard and recalls sending some of the councilmembers video, audio and pictures of some of the issues the neighbors have had. Several years ago, Councilman Dishman got ahold of their owner. The neighbors were having so much noise from the stores intercom system and, some of their equipment which some of the issues were addressed but there is still a lot of noise out there. Overbey then plays a video he took while standing in his backyard (holding his phone and playing the video into the microphone for everyone to hear). He assures the sound is coming from a combine sitting just behind the fence of his backyard while he is outside sitting on his deck. Acknowledging the company wants to move out to Bellaire Ave and expand their business which is okay but the neighborhood has a problem is the noise. The noise while Overbey is sitting on his deck in the summer time, trying to enjoy a nice day... and reverts back to his video of what they hear. Last week on February 1<sup>st</sup>, Overbey recorded some more while on his deck at just after 8:00 AM and plays it for the Council and audience. Another video he took on February 2, 2022 at approximately 10:00 AM shows the sound of power washing, he believes and plays that for everyone as well. A fellow audience member identified as Mr. Lush lives beside Overbey and the company is located right behind him. He addressed to Overbey that at the other meeting that they had drainage problem from there. At the Metropolitan Planning Commission, it was brought up to send an Engineer out there to check the drainage. Overbey recalls sending Councilman Clark, Councilwoman Selvey and Councilman Dishman pictures of some of the trash that blows down from the easement there where the gate and dumpster are located. There is a lot of trash there and the company does not go and pick it up but has been informed of it throughout the years. That is the main concern on the zoning variance is if they would move their equipment and things up toward McGalliard or somewhere at the other end of their property, somewhere where it's not right in their backyard, would be a big help to the neighbors because it's just hard to deal with. He remembers having a petition several

years ago that was presented to Councilman Dishman that he took to their owner. People all up and down Dartmouth just has a problem with that and are hoping to get this brought to light before they are able to expand their property because, again, it is just right behind some of their properties there on Dartmouth.

Councilman Polk refers to the company's zoning application and the various questions they had to answer, either yes or no, consist of "has the applicant provided stamped addressed envelopes to all property owners within 300 ft.?" Overbey states no sir. Polk continues, "if so, has the applicant discussed the rezoning with their owners personally?" Obviously, they have not discussed that with the neighbors. Polk assumes he is not understanding here and clarifies they are asking for the change but wonders if they are already using the vacant lots. Overbey explains no, they had a house there that they owned and last fall tore that house down. It was mentioned at the Zoning Commission that they were going to put stone and a rail fence there like what is around the rest of the property. Commissioner Henry brought up to put some more trees there because they did have to plant trees back there by the fence as kind of sound barrier but it takes a while for them to grow up (as you know) and a privacy fence there around that area. Right now, that area has just been excavated and there is nothing there. Obviously, at some point in time they store will need to do something with that area but the neighbors just have some concerns. They want them to be good neighbors and that's all they're asking. Right after they moved in and all this started, Overbey claims he went over and talked to a gentleman that said he was the manager. He remembers walking him out and walking to the back of the property. There, he asked him how he would like to hear the running of a the dynamiter (which is a very loud thing that tests engines, he guesses) and how he would like to have this in his backyard. He informed him that his family can be out on their deck and unable to even talk to each other. The gentleman said "well, we will try to do what we can to, you know, move that around," but they never did. The area the company is expanding is right behind Mr. Lush's house to his east with another house there with residents. Overbey states that Councilman Dishman has been out to his house before and there has been combines operating right behind the fence and revving up their engines. He just does not think it is necessary to do that.

Councilwoman Selvey recollects conversations about this issue before being had at Neighborhood Association meetings. She has an opinion she wants to share and is going to be very direct. From what she has discussed with Overbey, she thinks the Neighborhood Association has given every opportunity for Reynolds to communicate with them to make things right and it is her personal opinion that they have not. Overbey agrees that they have not. Selvey apologizes for that but she is here to be direct again in asking her colleagues on the Council to think twice and listen to the neighbors because she is pro-business, pro-expansion but not on the back of homeowners. It does not matter if your home is a \$500,000 home or a \$28,000 home, you're paying taxes and what is good for a \$500,000 home should be good for a \$28,000 one. She wishes to go on the record to state how she is not pleased with that business and the way they have treated Morningside is despicable, from her point of view.

Overbey thanks her and clarifies they have tried to reason with them on this. He states that Dishman in years past has been a big help in trying to talk to them as these issues have come up. He knows that Code Enforcement has been sent out over there before because of the trash. The neighbors have had to pick up a lot of Reynolds' trash out of their own yards, which is concerning about the expansion. Regarding the noise, there has been police there before because of the noise because the City of Muncie has a noise ordinance. Overbey does not know for sure how many decibels that is but knows it is loud, for sure. He agrees with Councilwoman Selvey that he is pro-business and recalls growing up on a farm so when Reynolds Farm Equipment moved back here, he felt right at home with tractors and combines. He did not know they were going to deal with that much noise and trash. Again, he mentions the neighbors trying to talk to them but as Councilman Polk pointed out, it was brought up at the

Metropolitan Planning Commission meeting if they did, in fact, sent out letters to people and talked with the neighbors, both of which the answer was no. That is when Councilman Dishman brought up the combines sitting right on the other side of the fence of their backyards. The gentleman from Reynolds said that is inaccurate and **doesn't happen**. Well, not according to what Overbey just presented to everyone. One of those videos showed that is right where that combine was sitting. Nobody here would want to hear that noise in his or her backyard and it is just that simple.

Robinson thinks it is clear that there are some issues here that need to be addressed and will remind everyone that this is only for Introduction so they do have until the March 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to gather further information. Robinson feels that there is always compromise to be had. Perhaps, there is an opportunity for the folks at the business and the neighborhood to have some conversations between now and then and to at least find some sort of compromise or resolution moving forward and that is what it would take (for Robinson) to give this an affirmative vote next month. Selvey agrees. Overbey states he is all about compromise. Councilman Ingram confirms that there isn't a representative here tonight from Reynolds to speak on behalf of the company. Robinson states it **doesn't appear** so.

Councilman Dishman refers to the engine part of it, when they dyno-test them, they can put mufflers on there to muffle that sound out but the company doesn't have mufflers on them. It is just straight out the engine and that is something they need to address on their equipment. Dishman assumes that probably, when they bring it back by Overbey's fence, they are trying to get the temperature up on that combine and that is how you get the temperature up, running it full blast. Overbey comments they are getting his temperature up. Dishman continues that is probably the reason why they are running them wide open. Although, they can considerably take those tractors and run them wide open on the side instead of being right back on the neighbors or put some sort of wall barrier back through there like on highways to cut the sound down. Overbey believes that he, Councilman Dishman and Councilman Clark talked about that. There is sound barrier walls on the interstate by the residential areas to keep that noise down. He doesn't know what it's going to take but knows the Neighborhood Association is willing to talk to them if they'll talk and try to negotiate something. Robinson thinks the best option would be, since Councilman Clark, Councilwoman Selvey and Councilman Dishman all have been a part of these conversations, maybe if Overbey wanted to facilitate a meeting with the folks at the business and the three of them he will trust the works of when they come back in March. He understands they have a business to run, as does Overbey, but there is some concessions that can be made to appease the neighborhood. In this case he think it's vital, at least, in speaking for his own vote, that there be some sort of compromise had with the Neighborhood. He appreciates Overbey's work on this along with Councilman Dishman, Councilman Clark and Councilwoman Selvey.

Dishman asks about making a motion to Table this until they talk to the people they need to talk with. Robinson informs he can make that motion if he chooses. Council Attorney Dan Gibson informs it **hasn't been Introduced yet so they can either Introduce it and then Table it or since he is the sponsoring councilperson, simply Withdraw it and refile it next month**. Dishman Withdraws ord. 5-22. He states there should have been a representative here represent them company and he **doesn't like to vote/pass things unless there is someone here to answer any questions they have**. WITHDRAWN.

#### ORD. 6-22 AN ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (MOTOR VEHICLE HIGHWAY).

A motion was made by Ingram and seconded by Polk to Introduce.

Craig Wright, City Controller, is going to speak briefly on the introduction of the next three ordinances and explains how there is a commitment for the next City Council meeting that all the

Department Heads of these three departments asking for appropriations be here to speak on it. Also, to refresh everybody's memory, the appropriations that are being asked for here were approved by the Finance Committee during the budget process in the fall but the DLGF did not approve of the additional appropriations because the increase weren't advertised by the deadline. Now, they are going about it this way to get it properly introduced. As far as the budget goes, it is February so it is still early... He further explains a commitment has been made that they will assess where all the departments are at midyear and see what additional appropriations they might need. This first one is an additional appropriation for the Motor Vehicle Highway fund for \$700,000 into Other Services & Charges.

Councilman Clark confirms these are monies from last year that was not spent. Wright confirms yes, from the Motor Vehicle Highway fund. He had discussed with Adam Leach, City Engineer, and Brian Stephen-Hotopp (prior City Engineer) and they were well aware of this and decided to appropriate it later in the year to go ahead and get it taken care of. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays. INTRODUCED.

ORD. 7-22 AN ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (BUILDING COMMISSIONER).

A motion is made by Green and seconded by Polk to Introduce. No comments. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays. INTRODUCED.

ORD. 8-22 AN ORDINANCE FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS (ANIMAL SHELTER).

A motion is made by Selvey and seconded by Polk to Introduce.

Kathy Bland, W. Bethel Ave, would like to thank them for introducing this ordinance but as a citizen has questions on the budget. She wonders how the budget is less than what it was last year when it was much more when it was turned in and approved by this Council. **She just doesn't understand how that happened but references the State turning it down and questions if they can talk about that now.**

Council Attorney Dan Gibson states it is a rather complex explanation that he is happy to talk to her about more after the meeting. However, he goes on to reference what Controller Wright just explained when the budget is introduced there is essentially a sealing of total money that can be budgeted and the DLGF says that total amount cannot be exceeded and is per fund. Because it is money that was in the General Fund (even though the overall budget was not exceeded by the changes that were made because reductions were made in a different fund), this needed to be done as an additional appropriation as opposed to being approved by the original budget process. Really, it goes back to not exceeding what was originally published when the budget was first introduced to Council.

Bland confirms it was introduced in August and she believes that the Animal Shelter hadn't even been able to see that budget that was turned in by the Mayor and Controller. She believes that has been discussed at prior meetings as well. She just wants everyone to be aware that the Shelter is operating on less money now than last year with a lot more animals that are in a lot worse shape. It is no fault of any of theirs but is just the way the world is right now. She appreciates this very much but at this rate, they are still at \$10.10 an hour on employees that quit every week. They will hire two and one quits. People can go anywhere and make much more than that and do a lot less physically and emotionally. She just doesn't think it is understandable (and claims she has been doing this for over 40 years) just how difficult it is to come there to work for \$10.10 an hour. There are a few out there that are just there for the animals and that's great but it is horrible out there. Every day you wake up and you face nothing but feces and urine, you stink and take chances of getting diseases or can even get ringworm from these animals. It's not a fun job. At this at this rate, they need 11 part-time employees but don't even have enough money in the budget this year because there is less money than last year. She claims the only reason they did it last year was because Director Browning gave up part of his salary and there was no Assistant Director so that

\$36,000 salary was put back into the budget so they could pay enough to have enough 11 part-time employees at \$10.10 an hour. Now, at 11 employees, they only have enough money in the budget to pay them \$8.06 an hour but the Mayor wants to know why they can't keep employees out there? President Robinson relays Bland is preaching to the choir. Bland just wants somebody to explain to her how this all happened because somebody had to know that this budget wasn't going to work. She doesn't think it was the Council but somebody did and she is just really upset. She thought things were going to be run different and thinks the public deserves to know what kind of shape and just how in-the-hole they are already. So many things and so many line items have already been spent. Bland is tired. She is now retired on a limited budget and has given every dime she had to this community for over 40 years to help. The Shelter calls her and her friend went an animal is dying and there isn't enough money to buy the medicine for it. She can't do it anymore and pleads that they need help out there. Those employees and everybody out there work their tails off. Yes, they can use more volunteers but who has time to set up a huge volunteer group? She has been volunteering out there forever and has a friend that goes out there every single day. Bland recalls she was just out there yesterday on a Sunday. They have to work so hard to do what the employees cannot do because they do not have enough employees because they keep quitting because they're not getting paid enough. She references how many of the councilmembers have went out and done fire ops with the fire department and ride-alongs with the police department so she encourages people to come out and spend an afternoon at the Shelter to see what it is really like. She knows they're just animals to most people but this City has taken property of them and caged them. They have to be fed and taken care of. Robinson completely understands and empathizes with her position. At this point, it is beyond their control, especially this evening with ordinance 8-22 in front of them only covering a portion of that. Bland questions if she can meet with some of the councilmembers to try to figure out how they can get more money out there. They need more money or Director Browning is going to run it in the red and end up losing his job. Robinson states, again, she is preaching to the choir and they all 100% want to see that rate of pay increased with multiple other things. He is still confident that those things will happen. From what he understands and what Controller Wright earlier said, it is an ongoing process of evaluation so he thinks it would be most appropriate to be a conversation between Director Browning, Controller Wright and Mayor Ridenour. At this point, it is beyond Council control. When it comes to additional appropriations and things, those have to come from the Mayor with approval from the Controller so the Council is limited on what they can do at this point but he does empathize. Bland then questions what she is supposed to do when those conversations aren't happening and are just getting thrown under the bus. Councilman Clark comments that it starts with their Board and that Board encouraging the Director to have conversations with the Controller and the Mayor and additionally to not leave money in the funds that they have held from the previous year, adding that there was over \$60,000 left the food fund. Also, starting their budgeting process early on in the year will help. It starts right now for 2023. Bland claims that Director Browning had a good budget. Clark adds they are getting this at the tail end. They tried to increase it during the budget process but obviously, the State didn't approve that. He highly recommends the Animal Shelter Director to be proactive in the budgeting process early on and not come after the fact and say he didn't see or know this because Clark believes that is one of the highest responsibilities of that department. Bland claims the director did and has five emails where he tried to make contact to get this taken care of and none were answered.

Robinson comments they are getting way off track and he does certainly appreciate Bland's service along with the Animal Shelter and its service. What is currently before Council is an additional appropriation for the Animal Shelter. He encourages her to reach out to anyone of the councilmembers individually to have a conversation and he is happy to talk with her in explaining exactly what has happened here. Also, he would encourage Director Browning with the Animal Shelter to continue to have those conversations with the Controller and with the Mayor to try to find some sort of resolution there. Beyond that, he thinks they just need to vote on this ordinance and get back on track. Bland appreciates

that but just wanted to know what she could do and states that Ethan is only one person and can only do so much. Robinson informs her that she is already doing everything in her power by encouraging others to help and do the same which is what is needed right now. The Animal Shelter is always available for volunteers and he certainly would encourage anyone who has the means to donate whether it be food, bedding, toys, etc. Bland adds for people to come out and do laundry and dishes is what they need more than anything, simple things like that. Robinson thanks her. Questions called. An all-in-favor vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays. INTRODUCED.

## RESOLUTIONS:

### RES. 5-22 A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MUNCIE DECLARING SUPPORT FOR THE RESETTLEMENT OF AFGHAN REFUGEES.

A motion is made by Selvey and seconded by Polk to Adopt.

Ari Hurwitz, Executive Director of the Muncie Afghan Refugee Resettlement Committee (MARRC) thanks the Council for considering this resolution and giving him the opportunity for the City of Muncie to officially welcome our Afghan neighbors. By the end of this week, we will have 62 new Afghan neighbors here in Muncie. He explains we have given them a home, a community and a hope after losing everything they had in the most brutal fashion and circumstances all because of their support of our United States service people and other officials. We have given them hope that they can rebuild their lives in safety with the support of a community like no other. Muncie has united like he has never before seen it in his tenure from Ball State University and their major healthcare providers to Muncie Community Schools to churches, specific organizations and individual donors and supporters. Muncie often gets a black eye for being divisive and he thinks it's an amazing opportunity to show what we can do because we're doing something no city has ever done. He recalls being contacted by other resettlement agencies, officials in Fort Wayne and officials in Indianapolis literally asking if they can meet with their leadership to find out how they have done what they have done structurally. He believes it was because it was heard in Fort Wayne that they have settled there and are suffering. In talking to some of the folks here, **they said they can't believe what is being done in Muncie. He thinks this is what Muncie can do and** will need to continue to build many more partnerships to develop further and deeper collaborators and many more donors are needed to reach their goals. Muncie has begun this process in the most beautiful way imaginable. When looking at our new Afghan neighbors, Hurwitz acknowledges there currently being 32 school-aged children enrolled in Muncie Community Schools. Beyond what that does for their future, think about MCS and declining enrollment with an additional 32 new students and the resources they bring in. Of the households that have been here longer than three weeks 100% of them are employed filling jobs that have been sitting unfilled in some businesses for quite some time all the way from education to service to factories. The partnership has only begun and the shared community idea is the key. We benefit from them being here and they benefit from what we bring together so he looks forward to many other opportunities to collaborate with the City because you will never meet more humble, thankful and hard-working people. Hurwitz explains he actually got an opportunity when he took his 7-year-old sledding at McCullough Park this past week to call up a family and say, **"hey, I can only fit 4 of your 7 kids in my car but if you want to come, let's go sledding!"** He had to explain what sledding was because they had never gone sledding before. If only you had seen the faces of joy of these four kids sliding down the hills of McCullough Park... One of them is 9 and kept skating down on his sneakers which was mind-blowing to him. The joy was just amazing. Hurwitz is looking forward to having deeper conversations with hopefully everybody on the Council. They would love to have each of their individual support as well. He thanks them and would love to see a unanimous vote on this resolution tonight to let it ring loud and clear that Muncie welcomes and shows what we can be when we unite.

President Robinson questions what resources are currently needed and how people that might be watching the live stream or are here in the audience can get connected to this group to be able to make donations. Hurwitz has three things and would love to say that money wasn't the biggest one but it is. They have a \$400,000 fundraising goal. So far, it has gone great and they have raised \$215,000 but it needs to continue. Without reaching the fundraising goal, they are not going to be able to support the families they would like to support. Anyone that wants to donate can go to their website, which is [www.AwakenInc.org/MARCC](http://www.AwakenInc.org/MARCC), and donate by credit card or check. The other thing they would benefit from is just human hours. There is a tremendous volunteer need, whether you can give 1 hour or you're retired and have a flexible schedule and can give more time; something as simple as volunteer drivers, volunteers to help set up homes when a family is coming in, move furniture or put essentials away in the houses. Additionally, volunteers who want to have a more personal connection. Each family that comes in is connected with a Welcome Family beyond being an emergency contact, it is initially the only family and people that they know here. It is an amazing opportunity and the Welcome Families have done incredible work. Some of it can be difficult as in the cultural differences are vast but every family they have talked to now looks at them as family and would do anything for them and vice versa. There is a Grandparent Program as well. Lastly, specific skills. Starting last Tuesday, they began a sewing class for the Afghan women – which was literally nothing they had thought of before. A donor called and explained how he worked with Iranian immigrants in another town and how big sewing is in their culture, he wasn't sure if that was true in Afghanistan but if it is, he offered to buy a brand new sewing machine and a Joann's Fabric giftcards for each. It started with two and he instructed Hurwitz to call him if they received anymore. Four more joined and then four more to where he has given an amazing donation at this point. It was then realized they need sewing volunteers so that was put out there and they ended up receiving 11 volunteers so it is actually a one-on-one sewing class led by a Muncie resident named Nancy Carlson. Meaning if you have a skill that you haven't heard being talked about but think it might be useful then please let them know. In regards to material objects, the things they need most are cars and cellphones, which he is aware those are big ask items but they have had one car donation so far. They don't need many because a lot of these folks are not ready to drive yet but there are two families who have received their driver's license already. That being said, if anybody has a car that is still very usable but they might be getting rid of please keep them in mind. Especially if anyone has a minivan as a family of nine just got their license and they are trying desperately to find them a minivan. That would be amazing. Each family has one phone so for spouses and families to be able to contact each other would be life changing for them. If you are getting a new phone and have a two-year-old or three-year-old phone (because you just love getting the new iPhone) please think about donating so some families can start receiving a second phone. In conclusion, for anyone that wants to get in touch he is going to provide the fundraising email one because he confirms he is the one that checks that and can further direct if needed. Email [MARRCfundraising@gmail.com](mailto:MARRCfundraising@gmail.com) if you have questions or want to volunteer, feel free to send your email address and cell phone number and Hurwitz will get it to their volunteer coordinator. They are also on Facebook as well, MARRC. Robinson thanks him and requests he pass along their thanks to those volunteers and committee members. He reverts to Hurwitz earlier mentioning Nancy Carlson and states that she is one of his favorite people in Muncie because of her heart. This is just one of many, many examples that show the true spirit of our community. Hurwitz adds that they are a 100% volunteer organization from himself and their chairperson spending 40 to 60 hours a week to Nancy and other folks that are giving dozens of hours a week. Again, it is 100% volunteer. He assures people when they give financial donations that 100% goes directly to support the families because of the way the program is structured.

Jason Donati, N. Vine St, wanted to rise in support of this resolution. It makes him feel with pride knowing that our community is so welcoming as a Muncie resident. He, his wife, and their family have had the opportunity service as a Welcome Family and it has been an incredible experience. He just can't

describe how much he is learning just as a volunteer in this role and learning a new language. He can't imagine how difficult and challenging it is for our families who are coming here to learn a new language as well so it's just been a great experience. When he saw this resolution, he wanted to come, stand, support it, and say that he really appreciates the City Council taking a stand and making a stance like this. Hopefully, more people get involved. Donati thinks it is extremely well-organized with what Hurwitz was talking about and it is set up to really help these families feel welcomed in our community. The thing he loves about Muncie the most is the people. As a Welcome Family and having taken our new neighbors out grocery shopping and things like that, he encourages people to help make them feel welcome. Feel free to come up and introduce yourself, especially if you see Donati out shopping with them. Again, it will really help make our families feel welcome. He just wanted to rise and say thank you for bringing this up and hopes they support it.

Councilwoman Selvey wishes to share something personal. She is an immigrant, herself. She has heard about people supporting this cause and people that are worried and scared. She shares that she will always be grateful as an immigrant for what Muncie has done for her and the opportunities she was given. She is so excited to see other people working so hard to help immigrants come to this country. Today, she is on this Council and hopes that it could be one of our new Afghani neighbors one day. Difference of opinion and difference of cultures bring growth and enlightenment in everybody's life, just like everyone in America that she has encountered has made her life enriched. The only thing she is jealous about is that she wishes her family were here with her. She came to this country and struggled. It was hard. She now has many blessings and is so happy that these families are coming intact. If you have met her and enjoyed being with her, just imagine how much you would enjoy meeting an entire family structure and learning from them. Again, she thanks Muncie and everyone she has met for the blessings and opportunities provided to her. She thinks this is great. Questions called. A roll call vote showed 8 yeas and 0 nays. ADOPTED.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

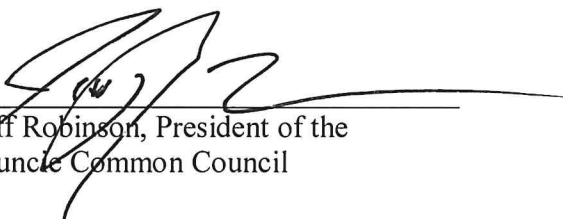
Steve Justus is here representing the Indiana Attorney General Todd Rokita and explains he works with his outreach covering northeast Indiana and mentions he is a Ball State graduate so it's good to be here this evening. He is here to speak on behalf of the Attorney General and give a brief introduction and to make aware some of their units within the office. The Attorney General represents the State so cannot give legal advice to personnel or counties. The legislators this year are obviously in the process of making laws and there was times where such as a County Council may have a question about a new law coming up. The office cannot provide the definition of legal terms but does encourage contact with the State legislators who are a part of the State as well. They would obviously speak to the State legislators if there were questions concerning a new state law. Justus also wanted to mention unclaimed property which in the State of Indiana is handled by the Attorney General's office. For example, if you worked a job but never received that check and moved away, they will claim that property up to 25 years and after 25 years the money goes back to the State. It is encouraged for people to go to their website, [unclaimedindiana.gov](http://unclaimedindiana.gov). You can look up any individual and find out to see if they have any money owed to them. It is that individual's money so they really try to encourage people to look into it for themselves. In 2021, \$48 million was given back to the constituents of Muncie. Another thing that they handle, too, is Medicaid fraud. It is important as Hoosiers that we take care of the elderly and also to use that money correctly and not misuse it. From 2009 to 2020, the Medicaid fraud credit investigation criminalized 360 criminal convictions with more than \$300 million in revenue. It is the Attorney General's office, again, that handles any issues with Medicaid. Another unit in their office is that of consumer protections, phone scams, identity theft and items that are recalled (which are identified each month on their website) in the State of Indiana. They handle all that and are still continuing those matters so if there are any issues, the

office has plenty of information to pass along to the Council and citizens. A brand new unit within their office is that of data breach. The Attorney General's office will contact and meet with businesses, schools and government offices because lots of times with data breaches when they try to find your identity they try to find your Social Security, Bank account numbers and things like that. Therefore, their office is trying to be very proactive in this system. Technology is a great system but unfortunately, there is people that try to take advantage of it and be dishonest. Within the office, their legal office team will come to the government offices to help to try to train people to prevent data breach. Anyone that has had a data breach taken place here, the office will try to help out in that situation as well. In closing, Justus just wanted to give a goodwill introduction from the Attorney General's office. He expresses he would love to further work with the Council in promoting some additional facts regarding the office.

Kathy Bland wishes to clarify Councilman Clark mentioning something about not using the food budget in that line at \$60,000 for last year. She believes it was \$6,000 or \$8,000, not \$60,000 and guesses part of that is her fault because she goes to get it for the Shelter free. She explains her and a woman named Debbie go over and get it hoping every year that that \$6,000 might be able to be used somewhere else or for litter. \$6,000 would only last the Shelter, at the most for what they get every week, 14 weeks out of 52 weeks. That is it. That is cat litter, dog food, cat food, both wet and dry so she just wanted to clarify that and put it on record that it was not \$60,000. A budget that he (Director Browning) did not spend and the reason why it wasn't spent was because they take their time and go over and pay for that. However, they have been taking the credit card and using the card this year to buy the food.

**ADJOURNED:**

A motion was made by Polk and seconded by Green to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 7 yeas and 1 nay (Robinson). ADJOURNED.



Jeff Robinson, President of the  
Muncie Common Council



Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk  
of the Muncie Common Council